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356 recesses for storing objects, and dried foods lie in confusion on the rack above the fire, or are kept in pots or gourds standing round the wall. Clothes, if the owner happens to have a change, lie on or under the bed; weapons and bundles of bark are hung on pegs on the wall. Magic charms or medicines are concealed under the eaves. Nevertheless, in spite of this air of apparent disorder, the Bemba housewife has certain standards of cleanliness and 'turns out' her hut quite frequently.

The floor, used as kitchen table, chair, and cupboard, must be swept with a grass brush once or twice a day. Though it is not scrubbed, it is frequently mudded over afresh. This is done sometimes for ritual purposes before relighting a new fire ceremonially[1] and sometimes for reasons of cleanliness only. Small babies are allowed to urinate all over the floor, but adults, even in the last stages of illness, demand to be carried outside for this purpose however cold the night. Sleeping mats are washed frequently and blankets put out to air in the sun. The washing of eating vessels
264 is simplified by the Bemba custom of sharing from one dish. Figures showing the employment of time by American farm workers show that these civilized housekeepers spend a quarter to half of the time devoted to domestic work in setting meals and washing up the dishes afterwards.[2] The Bemba housewife, on the contrary, has only two or three eating baskets to scrub and put to dry in the sun. Pottery cooking vessels or enamel saucepans are rubbed with ashes or gravel. Porridge spoons are stood in a special gourd of water and should not be allowed to touch the floor.

●296 The washing of clothes has now become a very important activity to the native, and must be considered under the heading of housecraft. The bark-cloth wraps used before the coming of the white man could not be washed, but a primitive kind of soap made from the bark of a tree natives call *mupapa* (*Sapuridaca longipedunculata*?), was used to cleanse some of the imported Arab cloth. Nowadays, cotton goods are worn practically universally. Generally they are rubbed against stones in running streams, and in these circumstances it is not unnatural that the white cloth, so much liked by the Bemba, quickly becomes a dirty yellow. Those

[1] A frequent occurrence during the infancy of a small child.

[2] 'The Use of Time by S. Dakota Homemakers', Grace E. Watson, *Homemakers*, Bulletin 247. S. Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, March 1930, p. 16.

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who can afford to use European soap[1] delight to do so, and laundry work, in particular ironing, is considered a fashionable employment and one that is a mark of wealth and status. As such, it is chiefly in the hands of the men, many of whom learn to iron in domestic service. The husbands as the wage-earners are in any case considered sole owners of both their own and their wives' clothes,[2] and when the young man can acquire a bit of soap he likes to wash and iron in public outside his hut, surrounded by an admiring crowd of small boys. Thus the washing of clothes is women's work in the old-fashioned villages, but a male occupation under more modern conditions.

Women care for their children devotedly, but rarely give up any time to them exclusively. Babies are washed with warm water and massaged each morning and fed with gruel twice a day (cf. p. 69), but otherwise they are slung on their mothers' backs wherever they go—to work or to a beer-drink—but are not definitely 'amused' for any period of time or taken for walks. Small sisters do most of the work of supervising the younger children, and thus relieve the mothers.

Preparation of Meals.

If the housework proper, as we have described it, is not a very heavy drain on a woman's time, the preparation of meals and all the associated activities are far longer and more complicated than in our society. Wood for the fire has to be collected daily, or every two days, and this is woman's work. A man fetches wood for his chief, or for a European when required to. For his wife he will only cut down a suitable tree stem on the way back from gardening, and leave it for her to pick up on her return. She usually carries a bundle of dried wood six to eight feet long on her head. When a village is newly built dry firewood is plentiful near home, but in two or three years' time the supply is almost exhausted and the phrase 'she has gone for firewood' (*Aya ku nkuni*) may mean an expedition of an hour or so. On the copper belt the problem has already become acute and well-paid Africans employ servants to gather their wood, or try to buy faggots in the native market —one of the causes of the great increase in the cost of living in urban areas.

[1] This practically only occurs in the neighbourhood of a white store.

[2] He wears her clothes whenever he likes, and I have seen men strip their wives as a dramatic gesture in a quarrel threatening to lead to divorce.